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**Mayor unveils scholarship program to help city students afford college**  
*Four local universities sign on as partners for program's inaugural year*

CANTON, Ohio – Joined by the presidents of three Stark County universities, Mayor William Healy announced Wednesday that he has created a scholarship program to help students in Canton afford a college education after graduation from high school. The program, which awards scholarships to students based upon their academic performance and service to the community, is a joint effort between the Mayor and **Malone University** (Canton), **Kent State University Stark Campus** (North Canton), **Walsh University** (North Canton), and **Mount Union College** (Alliance).

Citing the need for a more educated workforce to attract 21<sup>st</sup> century businesses to the city, **Mayor Healy** stressed the importance of a college degree in today's highly competitive business environment.

"We must prepare our students for the challenges they will face in today's global, information-based economy," Healy said. "We cannot rely on the manufacturing jobs of the past to sustain the future of our city. By giving young people a better chance of getting an education, we are giving our community a better chance of surviving in the years to come."

The **Mayor's Scholarship Program** is open to all public school students who live in the City of Canton and have attended their public high school for at least one year prior to application. Students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale and must have taken the ACT or SAT and received their score in the mail to qualify. Each participating school has its own set of requirements for the scholarship. A minimum of 14 scholarships will be available in the first year of the program, with a maximum of 36 available as the program continues over the next few years. *\*\*Note: A complete breakdown of scholarships offered follows at the end of this release.*

According to the U.S. Census Bureau\*, only 13% of Canton residents have received a bachelor's degree or higher. That figure is less than half of the national average of 27% and significantly lower than the state average of 23.3%. The Mayor said that this issue is one of the greatest challenges facing the city as he tries to attract new businesses, as employers and business owners often demand a diverse pool of educated employees when considering where to locate.

"A college education is no longer optional for a high school graduate who wants to succeed in the job market," Healy said. "If we do not make our students competitive, Canton will slip farther and farther behind other communities. Our school districts are working hard to get our young people ready, and we need to work with them wherever possible to make sure their students continue into higher education."

Healy credited the work of local teachers and administrators for improving test scores and graduation rates in recent years, and said that their efforts are critical to the city's overall development plans.



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Superintendents from the four public school districts that draw students from within city boundaries (Canton City, Canton Local, Plain Local, and Osnaburg Local) were in attendance to hear the announcement. All expressed their support for the program.

“We appreciate the Mayor and these universities working with us to raise the expectations of our students,” said **Teresa Purses, superintendent of Canton Local Schools**. “Anything we can do together that gives graduating seniors an extra push to go to college is worth the effort. This program is a great first step.”

**Christopher Smith, superintendent of Plain Local Schools** echoed her sentiment. “We appreciate anything that increases our students' access to higher education, and we are excited to continue our partnerships with the local colleges and universities that support this program,” Smith said.

**Dr. Gary Streit, president of Malone University** in Canton, said that he was “thrilled” to join the Mayor’s program and cited the university’s long-standing ties with the Canton community as a major deciding factor in Malone’s decision to become a partner.

“As the only university located exclusively within city limits, we believe we have an obligation to help our neighbors achieve academic and career success,” said Dr. Streit. “We strive to make Malone more accessible to Canton students, and believe that this program is a great way to accomplish this goal.”

Students who are eligible to participate and want to learn more should log on to the Mayor’s Web site at [www.cantonohio.gov/mayor](http://www.cantonohio.gov/mayor) and download an information packet. Applications are now available for the 2010-2011 academic year and will be accepted on a continuing basis.

Students can also call the Office of the Mayor at (330) 438-4307 to learn more.

\* U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey.

\*\* Chart: Scholarship Awards by School

School Name	Number of scholarships available for the first year of the program	Maximum number of scholarships awarded at one time during the life of the program	Scholarship Amount
Malone University	No limit	No limit	\$1,000-\$14,000
Kent State Univ/Stark	10	20	\$1,000
Walsh University	2	8	\$5,000-full tuition
Mount Union College	2	8	\$2,500

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